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RELIGION AND  
PROGRESS

AN ESSAY  
*BY HENRY C. PEDDER*

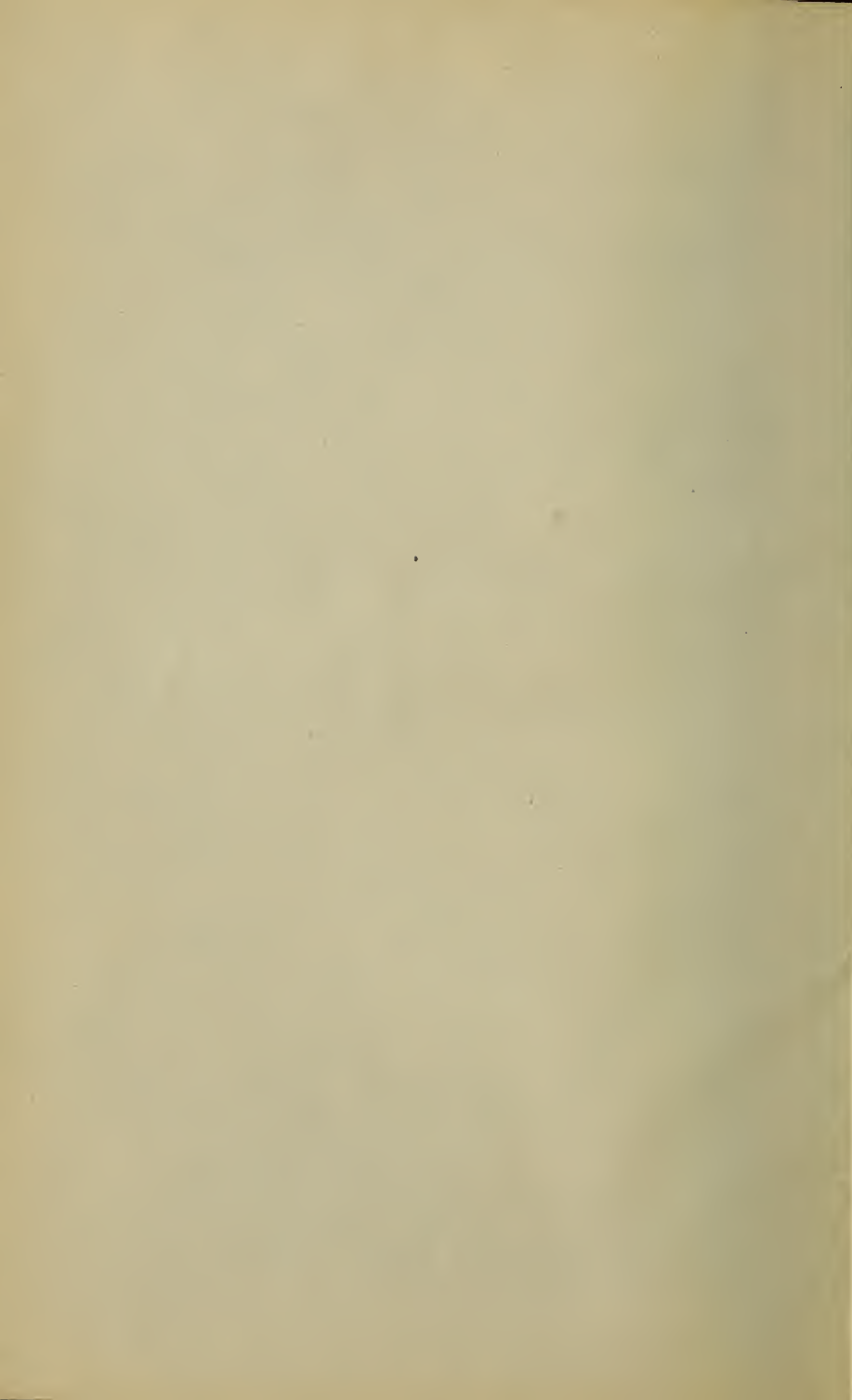
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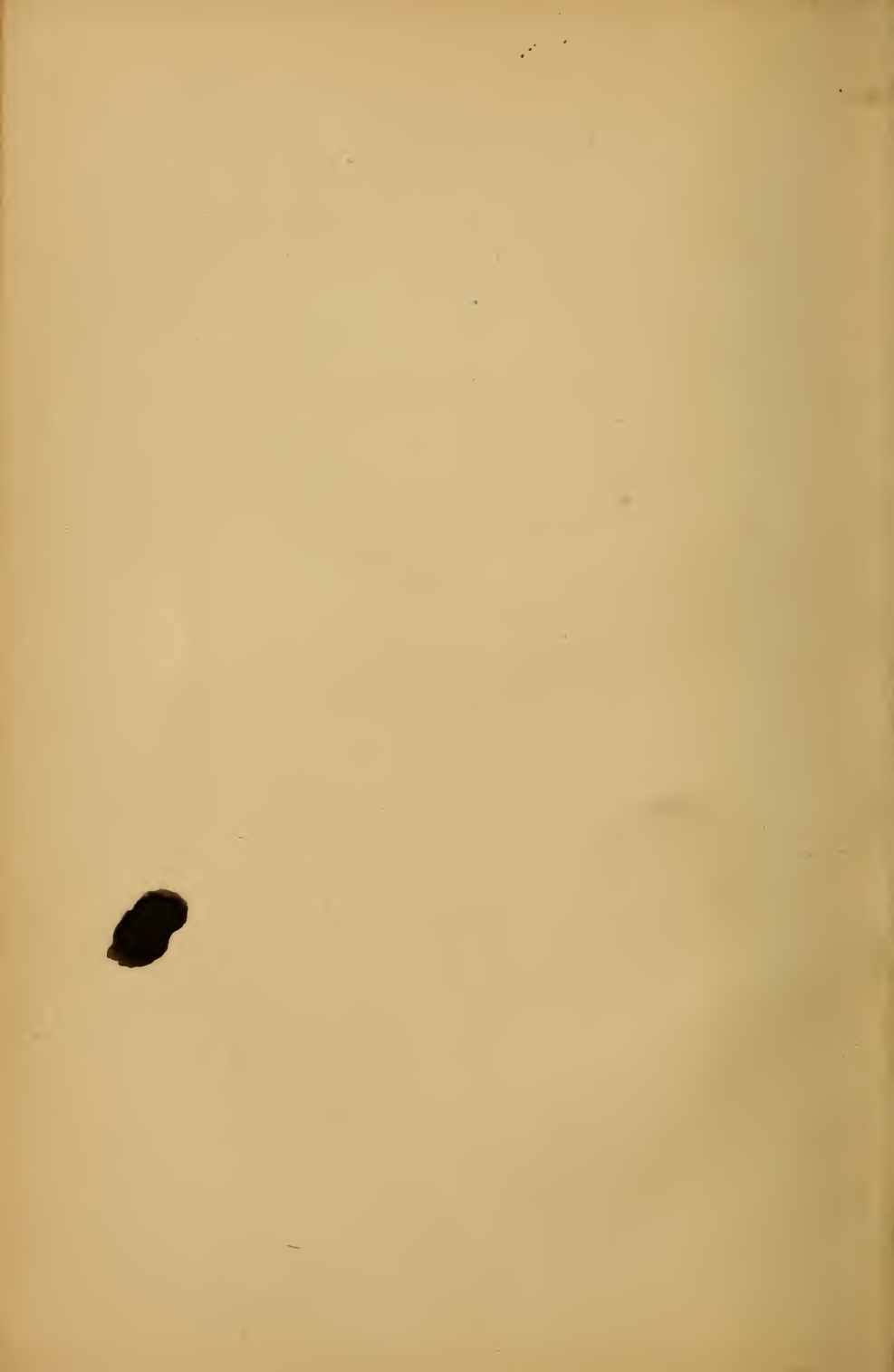














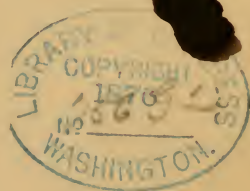
# RELIGION AND PROGRESS:

An Essay,

BY HENRY C. PEDDER.

“Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,  
But vaster.” . . .

—TENNYSON.



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## RELIGION AND PROGRESS.



NOTWITHSTANDING the indifference with which superficial observers are apt to regard the present conflict between Religion and Science, it is impossible to examine carefully the questions involved, and not realize the importance of the contest as well as the intimate relationship which the discussion bears to our highest interests. Whatever the cause, and whatever the probable result, the fact still remains that the present age is one of intense intellectual activity, accompanied by a growing consciousness that the changes involved in our present condition must necessarily be of a momentous character.

Problems which a hundred years ago were deemed finally settled and disposed of, have risen from their graves, and clamor for reconsideration and readjustment.

According to Professor Huxley, "The scenes are shifting in the great theatre of the world. . . . Men are beginning, once more, to awake to the fact that matters of belief and of speculation are of absolutely infinite practical importance, and are drawing off from that sunny country 'where it is always afternoon'—the sleepy hollow of broad indifferentism—to range themselves under their natural banners. Change is in the air. It is whirling feather-heads into all sorts of eccentric orbits, and filling the steadiest with a sense of insecurity. It insists on reopening all questions, and asking all institutions, however venerable, by what right they exist, and whether they are, or are not, in harmony with the real or supposed wants of mankind."

Nor does this seem an exaggerated statement of the case. It is because the present tendency of science is largely iconoclastic that we need to realize the dangers which it threatens, as well as the advantages which it promises. The wholesale destruction of images is a comparatively easy task, but the careful analysis and nice discrimination between what is intrinsic and extrinsic in religion, require something more

than precipitancy of thought and rashness of judgment.

In the intellectual as in the physical world, sudden upheavals may be unavoidable; but they are certainly not desirable. Besides, the circumstances which have called into existence the present powerful scepticism, are necessarily the very conditions which demand the most diligent exercise of our discriminative faculties. The intellectual activity which reveals to us so much that was false and shallow in our previous beliefs, is *per se* the most imperative reason why we should endeavor to preserve the fundamental facts of religion, independently of the errors of theological speculation.

In other words, we have reached a stage in our intellectual development, when any attempt at indifference, or any effort to stand still, mean certain destruction to the system of thought which places itself in such a position. It is of no avail to argue, as is sometimes done, that the teachings of science will never change the religions of the world. The idea involved in such an argument is either the outgrowth of wilful blindness or the grossest ignorance. Chris-



tianity is to-day widely different from what it would have been without the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, to say nothing of the more recent influences of German philosophers; and the principle holds equally good as to the present relationship between religion and science. The intellectual process which has busied itself for ages in the construction of Christian dogma, is not one whit less potent when applied to the encroachments of scientific on religious thought. In their last analysis they are both the products of the same law of change, the same principle of gradual growth, the same indestructible longing of the human mind which nothing but the acquisition of truth can satisfy.

It is true, as we approach intelligently the present antagonism between religion and science, we fail to discover a sufficient reason for its existence, while we are also reminded of the knights who fought about the color of a shield, of which neither had seen more than one side. There is a certain amount of one-sidedness in the controversy which forces these conclusions upon us; but a moment's reflection will convince us that a simple discovery of this kind is by no means

sufficient to remedy the evil. Admitting that the cause of the conflict is due to mutual misunderstanding, it is still true that the spirit of hostility, based on misunderstanding, which has so seriously impeded the world's progress in the past, may yet do so in the future. The blind and ignorant prejudice which heaped ignominy upon Copernicus while living, and which insulted his ashes when dead—to say nothing of the imprisonment of Galileo and the torture of Bruno—are retrogressive elements which we cannot too carefully exclude from any discussion pretending to deal with the claims of scientific thought.

Indeed, the more clearly we examine these dark instances, in which prejudice and superstition tyrannized over reason, the more clearly will we discover that a calm and fearless investigation is the only means by which we can ever hope to harmonize the progressiveness of science with the fundamental verities of religion.

The more carefully we study the laws of our spiritual, no less than our intellectual, development, the more evident will it be that we can-

not permit the existence of the *odium theologium* without seriously impeding the cause of progress. In the wise arrangement of those laws which govern man's progress, it seems to be an essential condition that the human mind should be left entirely free to work out its problems independently of the existence of previously-established dogmas and time-honored traditions. In urging this, however, let us not fall into the error of supposing that an unrestricted spirit of inquiry is in itself a panacea for all ills, or even beyond all contingencies a condition of progress. While we cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of intellectual freedom, we are equally bound to protest against that form of philosophical quackery which regards reason as the sole condition on which progress depends. Indeed, it is even possible that an unscientific interpretation of science may sit upon the human mind with a weight no less oppressive than the nightmare of superstition. In one sense, it would be an act of intellectual suicide to raise a hue and cry against science because it compels us to change our views of God and Nature. In another sense,



it would be equally an act of spiritual suicide did we permit the finer sensibilities of our nature to be crushed by the iron hand of *necessity*, compelling ourselves to exclaim, in view of that awful sense of loneliness and hopelessness which a relentless fatalism necessarily induces,

“How strangely on my heart  
This night a sadness weighs,—an aching void.  
I want to cry, but wherefore? I would go,  
But whither? Homesick, but where is home?”

With all its advantages, it is unfortunately true that science has conjured up a spectre which causes us to shudder as we look upon its ghastly expression. That the apparition will ever become so far materialized as to have a permanent habitation among us, is, I am aware, extremely doubtful. Nevertheless, as one of the present characteristics of scientific thought consists in the effort to establish this overshadowing fatalism, we cannot consistently exclude it from our estimate of the relationship which science bears to religion. Granting, for the sake of argument, that the doctrine of irresistible necessity is far from being an established scien-

tific fact, it is at least so far supported by many leading scientists, that it meets us at the threshold of our present investigation. It is one thing to listen attentively to Professor Tyndall, when, in his memorable Belfast address, he declares that he has touched on debatable questions and led us over dangerous ground; but it is quite another to yield a blind assent to doctrines which do not necessarily result from the legitimate teachings of science. It is the principal characteristic of Professor Tyndall's address, that it possesses the advantage of bringing many important questions before the intellectual consciousness of the age; whereas the tendency which confounds law with fatalism can only be considered as the result of hasty and imperfect generalization. Against the pseudo-scientific estimate which seeks to fetter our finer sensibilities, we are bound to argue that as there is a science of nature by means of which we interpret the physical conditions by which man is surrounded, so is there a philosophy of science, defining and determining the legitimate uses of scientific thought.

Against the scientific assertion that there are

no evidences of the existence of mind outside of matter, we are fully warranted in urging that, as long as the fact of mind exists, it is impossible to account for it on the ground of materialism, without resorting to the absurd supposition that there is more in the effect than in the cause. These and other kindred considerations suggest that careful discrimination which alone can guide us through the conflicting elements of modern thought. By all means let reason be unrestricted, and let scientists pursue their investigations undisturbed; but let us also remember that when we approach that borderland where religion, science, and philosophy meet, we are called upon to deal with subjects which necessarily elude the exact measurement of scientific analysis. Whatever may be thought of the substance of the soul, its phenomena are facts which admit of no dispute. To the man who carefully studies himself, they are as real and potent as the laws of gravitation or electricity. It is true there is a sense in which psychology will always be open to the charge that it deals with subjects which for the most part transcend our finite comprehension; but

this is far from invalidating its claim to be considered the most important of the sciences. Once admit the existence of those phenomena which we can only explain as effects of which the human soul is the cause, and the demands of psychology are beyond dispute.

Besides, if logic can be considered a science because it teaches the rules of right-thinking, psychology is equally a science, since we cannot attain the principles of logic without passing through the very phenomena with which psychology pretends to deal. If the cultivated study of logic makes us skilful reasoners, the cultivated study of psychology will just as surely enable us to become better acquainted with ourselves, at the same time demonstrating more and more fully the existence of those spiritual faculties which, besides constituting the basis of all religious thought and feeling, necessitate the cultivation of our emotional as well as our rational nature. As we survey the present attainments of Science, and take into account its magnificent promises for the future, I cheerfully admit that we are bound to endorse the poet's sentiment :



“The mind of man is this world’s true dimension,  
And knowledge is the measure of the mind.”

To any one who examines the subject carefully, it must be evident that reason has always been, and must always be, the great motive power of human progress. We cannot appreciate too heartily the usefulness and supremacy of reason; but this is not all.

If we admit that there is something grand and noble in intellectual culture, we must also admit that there is a beauty pertaining to sentiment which we can ill afford to dispense with,—a beauty, it may be, which eludes the perception of a cold intellectual nature, but which is, nevertheless, equally with reason, an essential condition of human progress.

If, on the one hand, we proudly point to science, ascending higher and yet higher the dizzy heights of knowledge, and from her exalted position measuring the heavens and analyzing the chemical substances of the sun, we cannot deny that there are other demands peculiar to our nature, which a purely intellectual diet can never satisfy. After we have

risen to the sublimest view of the universe, and have become lost and bewildered in contemplating the wonderful arrangement which connects the various chains of sequence under the uniformity of correlation and continuity—after we have again and again turned to the vast problem merely to feel ourselves more and more surrounded with mystery at every step—it surely is encouraging to feel that, although the widest scientific knowledge fails to reveal more than a faint outline of God's existence, we may at least feel his presence in our souls, elevating and purifying our affections, and at the same time investing life with an infinite meaning and a significant beauty.

In other words, while we concede the supremacy of reason, we cannot deny that there are deep emotional experiences and profound spiritual agitations peculiar to our nature, for which science, in its ordinary sense, has no response.

It is true there have been instances, as in the Stoical philosophy, when a purely intellectual culture produced some rare examples of character and human greatness. The characters of

Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus will always occupy prominent positions in the world's history, and it is therefore but simple justice that we should pay the respect due to these illustrious specimens of the school of Zeno. In admitting, however, that there is a greatness in the best representatives of Stoicism which fairly demands our admiration, we cannot deny that it is a greatness purchased at the sacrifice of some of the best and finest feelings of our nature.

“Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm, and tames the fury of the waters around it,”\* is an excellent precept; but in the largest sense of human development it is not enough. It admirably sets forth the rule of conduct observed by a philosopher who, in the midst of great moral corruption, preserved his own manliness and integrity; but it does not meet the ordinary demands of human nature. It is impossible to deny the greatness of this illustrious emperor and eminent philosopher; but it is equally impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that even in the midst of his intellectual and

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\*Meditations of Marcus Aurelius.

moral attainments, he was invariably overshadowed by that spirit of sadness which is the inevitable result of Stoicism. It is well that we should pause before this noble soul, and, in our admiration, derive those influences which will most assuredly elevate and ennoble us; but it is equally well that we should discriminate carefully between Marcus Aurelius as an exceptional character, and Marcus Aurelius as the direct product of Stoicism. I know that the Stoical philosophy, in attempting to cultivate virtue without hope, possesses a certain charm which we cannot fail to appreciate. It is, indeed, a grand achievement, when the intellectual nature so thoroughly predominates as to bring the whole man under its control; but it is an unhealthy condition nevertheless. Because it is divorced from sentiment, Stoicism mars the beauty of the world, and bids the human soul drift into sadness and despair, rather than encourage those dreams and aspirations which emanate from all true religion and all sound philosophy. While the Stoics are correct in discountenancing fear, they are incorrect in suppressing feeling.



There is a sense in which it is perfectly true to say that the more we know of the laws which govern the universe, and the nearer we come, through such knowledge, to the God who made those laws, the less cause will we have for fear; but it is not true that the more we know, the feebler must be our hope. The scientific statement that God is unknowable, may, for the moment, stagger our faith and diminish our religious enthusiasm; but, we may depend upon it, there will come a reaction in favor of religion and the reality of those dreams of peace and beauty which our spiritual consciousness suggests. Besides, the mode of reasoning which asserts that God is unknowable, assumes necessarily that He is already partially known, and thus becomes its own contradiction. Indeed, it places science in the anomalous position of asserting that a thing is unknowable, of which we know nothing.

Without a partial knowledge, is it not simply impossible to predict probable consequences? If we know nothing of God—being completely without evidences as to His character and existence—where do scientists derive the premises of

their argument by which they seek to prove that He is unknowable? Surely, the more carefully we examine the subject, the more clearly must it appear that absolute nescience is as incompatible with science as it is with religion. Reduced to its last analysis, the assertion that God is unknowable is a simple absurdity, and can only exist where scientists and philosophers are wilfully blind to the first principles of reasoning. It is one thing for scientists to repudiate the anthropomorphic conceptions with which theology has surrounded the Ruler of the universe; but it is quite another to pronounce the whole subject of theological speculation an idle and profitless dream.

Admitting that an increasing scientific knowledge will necessarily dissipate many of the formulas under which theologians have sought to render God comprehensible, there must always remain a sense in which the God of the scientist will resemble the God of the Christian. Because the one proceeds from a scientific conviction, and the other from a religious impression strengthened by revealed religion, there must be a degree of unlikeness between them; but be-

cause they both, as to their fundamental principles, appeal to the fact of human consciousness, there must be a likeness and sympathy between them. In other words, once let us succeed in divesting the subject of all irrelevant and extraneous issues, and the verdict of science and philosophy, no less than the verdict of religion, will be, that He who "laid the foundations of the earth, and shut up the sea with doors, saying, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," is also He who "hath put wisdom in the inward parts, and hath given understanding to the heart."\*

Nor is it of any avail to urge that the religious sentiment belongs to the infancy of the race, while science is the product of maturity. Confessedly religion is as old as the history of the human race, while science is yet in its infancy; but this can only be regarded as an indication of their respective uses. While science can claim, in some respects, an ascendancy over religion, it is the merest folly to suppose that it can ever supersede it.

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\* Job, xxxvii. 4, 8, 11, 36.

The advancement of science will necessitate many important changes, but to suppose that this involves the destruction of those instincts of our nature which express themselves in religion, is simply to ignore the dictates of reason and common-sense. Correctly appreciated and properly understood, the change of ideas which characterizes the growth of scientific thought is a winnowing process, and nothing more. In one respect, it is subject to that inherent progressiveness of the human mind which renders it impossible for the world to stand still; in another respect, it is subject to that indestructibility of truth which gives such meaning to the intellectual filiation of mankind, and which also admonishes us to welcome every contribution to the common stock of knowledge. The duty of man as man is *thought*, and we cannot afford for a moment to impede its action. Instead, therefore, of wringing our hands in despair, and looking tremblingly on the advancement of science, there is every reason why we should regard it as a sublime triumph of the human intellect. Instead of predicting ruin and disaster from the encroachments which science

is making on theology, we ought rather to congratulate ourselves on the evidences of such intellectual activity. Look not mournfully into the past, but wisely improve the present, is equally in accordance with the interests of religion, science, and philosophy.

But let us not be deceived. If we are living in a more advanced condition than our ancestors, we are only so situated in obedience to that general law which assigns to each age its characteristics and responsibilities. If it is true that in approaching the manhood of the world, we are gradually laying aside the dreams of childhood, it is equally true that, in the substitution of knowledge for conjecture, we cannot, without serious detriment, lay aside the claims of our emotional nature.

Up to a certain point, the scientific conception which we embody under the name of Force, is all very well, and answers a useful purpose; but, after all, it is merely a question of time when the ablest scientist will be bound to admit that he is surrounded by a mysterious Power which he cannot reduce to the dimensions of pure reason. It is only a question of



time when the most gigantic intellects will feel themselves bound to fall back on things hoped for and unseen. As Bayard Taylor has well expressed it :

“If we look up

Beyond the shining form wherein Thy love  
Made holiest revelation, we must shade  
Our eyes beneath the broadening wing of Doubt,  
To save us from Thy splendor. All we learn  
From delving in the marrow of the earth,  
From scattering thought among the timeless stars,  
From slow-deciphered hieroglyphs of power  
In chemic forces, planetary paths,  
Or primal cells whence all Thy worlds are born,  
But lifts Thee higher, seats Thee more august,  
Till Thou art grown so vast and wonderful,  
We dare not name Thee, scarce dare pray to Thee.  
Yet what Thou art Thyself hast taught us: Thou  
Didst plant the ladders which we seek to climb,  
Didst satisfy the heart, yet leave the brain  
To work its own miracles, and read  
Thy thoughts, and stretch its agonizing hands  
To grasp Thee.”

Of course, it will always be possible, notwithstanding this relativity between reason and sentiment, for a certain class of sceptical thinkers to sneer at the function of religion, and ridicule

the idea of its possessing any value or utility. The inability of these superficial thinkers to discover any meaning or usefulness in this phase of consciousness is, however, no evidence that it is valueless. As we go back into the past, and trace the various shapes that superstition has assumed, we certainly learn many important lessons from the development of the religious instinct in exact parallelism to the intellectual improvement of the race; but this, instead of demonstrating the uselessness of religion, proves most conclusively its power of expansion and adaptability to all conditions of human progress. Were religion merely an evanescent phenomenon, growing out of man's earlier and unenlightened conditions, it would have disappeared long ago from the civilized world. Instead of this, however, it has traversed the ages, growing brighter with every intellectual advance.

Proportionally as the human mind has risen to its highest attainments, just so surely has there come an encouraging conviction that there is an intimate sympathy between the yearnings of our spiritual nature and the God who made them. We may not be able to explain the

manner in which this intercourse is effected, but we do know from experience that it belongs to the underlying realities of spiritual phenomena. We may not be able to demonstrate satisfactorily the relationship between the objective act of worship and the subjective state of our consciousness; but we do know that there is a very real and intimate relationship between them.

Independently of all creeds, seasons, or places, we do know that there is a sense in which the deep and tender feelings of the soul react upon and beautify our life and character. The deeper the feeling, the stronger the influence.

Or, to put the subject somewhat differently, while the grandest attainments of reason are but so many conditions, reminding us, in a measure, of the labors of Sisyphus, there seems a beautiful compensation in that law of our nature which harmonizes thought with feeling, and which, from the necessities of the case, causes the relationship between reason and sentiment to be strictly supplementary. It is true there are times when the rational and sentimental elements in our nature exhibit a tendency to encroach on each other, but this is no proof that they are



mutually destructive, or that their respective spheres are not equally a necessity to man.

If, after all our intellectual attainments, it is true, as shown by Kant, that every rational demonstration of God's existence involves a contradiction, it is certainly encouraging to believe that faith is not without its advantages. According to an eminent authority, "If the attempt to grasp the absolute nature of the Divine Object of religious thought thus fails on every side, we have no resource but to recommence our inquiry by the opposite process,—that of investigating the nature of the human subject. Such an investigation will not, indeed, solve the contradictions which our previous attempt has elicited; but it may serve to show us why they are insoluble. If it cannot satisfy to the full the demands of reason, it may at least enable us to lay a reasonable foundation for the rightful claims of belief. If, from an examination of the laws and limits of human consciousness, we can show that thought is not, and cannot be, the measure of existence; if it can be shown that the contradictions which arise in the attempt to conceive the infinite have their origin,

not in the nature of that we would conceive, but in the constitution of the mind conceiving; that they are such as must necessarily accompany every form of religion, we may thus prepare the way for a recognition of the separate provinces of Reason and Faith."\*

Nor is it requisite, in admitting this, that we should diminish one iota the legitimate claims of reason. To prevent misunderstanding and confusion, it is simply requisite to discriminate carefully between a process of thought which can only argue within the circle of things known, and that function of faith which predicates the existence of God because the idea responds to a feeling imbedded in the inmost recesses of our consciousness.

In this connection, I am aware how great an opportunity is still afforded those who seek to reduce everything to a mathematical certainty, to ask us how we know that this sentiment or act of faith indicates anything more than an illusory phase of our consciousness. Excluding, for the moment, the evidences of revealed relig-

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\*Limits of Religious Thought.--Mansel.

ion, it does seem somewhat difficult to answer this objection conclusively. At least we may, however, answer it partially,—possibly with satisfaction to those who refuse to have their mental vision blurred by the sophistries of Pyrrhonism.

The use and supremacy of reason I have already admitted; but while we recognize the importance of this noblest of man's attributes, it is also well that we should subject our ideas of reason to a process of reasoning. Having done this, we necessarily discover that the proper province of reason, in dealing with subjects where religion is concerned, is to perform, for our religious ideas, the same office as that which chemistry performs in dealing with material substances, viz., that of analysis or decomposition.

Without in any way abandoning the principles of reason, we are, from the very nature of religious phenomena, compelled to seek some antecedent condition of faith from which reason proceeds, and with which it is bound, in the long run, to harmonize its discoveries.

Whatever the attainments of reason may be,

there is no escape from the conclusion, not only that every act of reason implies an act of faith as its necessary accompaniment, but also that there are truths which we discern without reasoning, and which, because they rest on the power of intuition, cannot, by any process of reasoning, be demonstrated. Thus we know, but cannot prove, that a part is less than the whole; that an effect implies a cause; that a straight line is the shortest line between two points; and that if equal quantities be taken from equal quantities, the remainders will be equal. Truths of this class are obviously independent of our reasoning powers. They are, it is true, dependent on intellectual perception, but it is the perception which springs spontaneously from our minds, as an intuitional belief, and cannot, therefore, be strictly considered a process of reasoning.\* Independently of the results of rea-

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\* In making this statement, I would not be understood as attempting to revive the Platonic doctrine of *innate ideas*; it being simply my aim to discriminate between certain judgments and conceptions which are necessarily developed as soon as the mind awakens to the requisite conditions, and those labored results of a strictly rati-

son, the reality of these relations is indisputable; they are their own evidences, and receive no additional weight from the intellectual process which enables us to think critically, and which also enables us to analyze our own mental processes for the purpose of discovering why these relations are everywhere and necessarily present.

I am aware that the power to know involves a philosophical scrutiny of the grounds and trustworthiness of all knowledge and belief, but even this does not deny the possible existence of certain truths which cannot be subjected to the ordinary process of rational demonstration. It is obviously truths of this class to which Buffier alludes when he says, "They are propositions so clear that they can neither be proved nor attacked by any propositions more clear than themselves." Sir William Hamilton also evidently means the same class of truths, when he

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ocinative process, which come more directly within the limits of experimental philosophy. Among the former I place—apparently, to me, with the sanction of reason—the fundamental principles of our religious consciousness.



says they are "*incomprehensible*," by this term meaning that we know the fact, but cannot give the reason. Besides, not only is the reality of being affirmed through the medium of consciousness, but the relations of being and the laws of thinking and feeling are in the same manner as necessarily established. In other words, philosophy, in asserting its own possibility, asserts in the same breath the truthfulness of consciousness, and the value of those perceptions which are no less acts of knowledge, because they emanate from conditions of faith or feeling. Man is a spirit, and, in the highest sense of his development, depends on those spiritual forces which superficial thinkers are so apt to overlook in their endeavors to manufacture, rather than discover, truth. To use the language of one who has given much thought to the laws which govern the human mind and influence the conditions of progress, "It is a truth, and not an idle phrase, that man does not live by bread alone; that it is his privilege to live by aspiration, hope, and love, to be moved by ideal impulses which cause him to check the impulses of a lower self, to forego the transient pleasure of

sense, and passionately strive after the nobler pleasures of heart and intellect. We all place before ourselves the ideal of a noble life,—the type of a grander character than our infirmities enable us to realize; and we do not look on that ideal as a fiction,—on that type of character as a falsehood,—because we fail to realize it. Like the typical laws of physical processes, these conceptions are solid truths, although they only exist as ideals; and he who imagines their validity impugned because human nature can but imperfectly realize them, is as ignorant of life as he would be who should deny the validity of natural laws because of the perturbations observable in natural events.”\* It is precisely because this ideal want in man’s nature is so real and universal, that religion possesses such power and importance, and presents so strong a claim upon our attention; it is precisely because there are certain demands inhering in human nature, which relate us to an order of things unapproached by sense, that we need to recognize the existence and reality of our religious con-

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\* Problems of Life and Mind, by George Henry Lewes.

consciousness as the only means whereby we can understand the laws of man's spiritual culture. After making every allowance for all the extravagances and absurdities that have been perpetrated in the name of Religion, and, after admitting the partial darkness which more or less surrounds all spiritual phenomena, we are bound to recognize the usefulness and importance of that synthesis between thought and feeling without which our religious consciousness would be impossible. Conceding the fact that the world of sense holds man to its realities, even in our moments of purest feeling and most refined reasoning, it is no less true that the condition of thought and feeling, by means of which we project our individuality into a sphere of spiritual forces, is quite as real as those sense-perceptions by means of which we realize our relationship to the world of matter. However much we may differ as to the ultimate position of psychology as a science, we cannot, if we are candid in our investigations, deny that man is possessed of a dual consciousness, relating him equally to sensual and super-sensual phenomena. It is true that sense-perceptions,



because they are simpler and more easily apprehended, are more easily reduced to scientific generalization; but this, while it proves the necessarily slow progress of the science of the soul, in contrast to the rapid advance of physical science, proves also the necessity of concentrating all our energies on those laws of our spiritual growth, which are obviously of such vast importance. We say that science is in its infancy, and we unhesitatingly predict for its future a glorious career of conquest; but if we thus believe in the boundless possibilities of the human mind in dealing with facts pertaining to the physical world, is it less reasonable to predict an ever-increasing beauty in that form of our spiritual consciousness which elevates us into an atmosphere of purified thought and feeling? Clearly, it is quite as much a condition of progress that sentiment should beautify reason, as it is that reason should regulate sentiment. Correctly understood and properly appreciated, they are the complements of each other, and cannot, under a process of healthy advancement, be separated. We stand erect, calm, confident, when we seek truth through the analysis of reason;

we prostrate ourselves in contrition, or we rise on the wings of pure and holy aspiration, when we seek God through the action of the religious sentiment; but the difference between these attitudes cannot be distorted into proving that they are necessarily antagonistic, or even inimical. From the necessities of man's nature, and the requirements which they fulfil, they must differ in character, but it is a gross error to assert that the cultivation of the one necessitates the suppression of the other.

Nor is it too much to claim that there is a sense in which sentiment is, perhaps, the deepest and divinest element in human nature. It is the motive power of all that is most beautiful in art; it is the cradle of all that is most elevating and ennobling in music and poetry; it is the cause of all that is purest and best in the experiences of life; and, as such, cannot be dwarfed or suppressed without producing the most disastrous consequences.

Indeed, even if we admit that the demands of sentiment are in a measure subservient to the demands of reason, we do not thereby deny the claims which we urge on behalf of our

emotional culture, and which, from their intimate relationship to the laws of spiritual development, enter so largely into the subject of our religious consciousness. It may be the business of science and philosophy to show us that sentiment can only be relied upon in so far as it is governed and directed by knowledge; but it is not the business of either science or philosophy to attempt the destruction of that background of human feeling from which the earliest devotional impulses of our ancestors sprang, and which still expresses itself in the religious observances and ceremonials of an enlightened people. Without in the least attempting to diminish the claims of science, there is a beauty beginning with mythology, and ending in the highest teachings of the purest religion, which we can ill afford to lose. We may feel, as we study the religious history of the world, that the lisps of the human soul have been very imperfect and distinct; but we cannot, if we candidly examine the testimony, refuse to say, "The utterance does not perish which many peoples utter; nay, this is the voice of God." It may be incumbent on science to teach us

that the whispering breeze and the fierce tornado are but the consequences of air moving with different degrees of velocity, or that there is no generic difference between heat and cold; but it would be wholly unreasonable to insist that our every feeling must, therefore, be brought into harmony with scientific facts, and the language of poetry be limited to scientific definitions. As we advance in scientific knowledge, we must necessarily lay aside many ideas and impressions which take their rise in unscientific views of nature; but this, while it changes our estimate of the conditions by which we are surrounded, can never render it useless that we should recognize the feelings which the phenomena of nature elicit as no less facts than the phenomena themselves. We live in an age which renders it almost impossible for us to enter, with proper appreciation, into the thoughts and feelings of that earlier age, when the awakening powers of the human mind expressed themselves in the childlike but beautiful language of mythology. Surrounded as we are by our railroads and telegraphic communications, it requires an extraordinary effort to place our-

selves in sympathy with those primitive conditions when the fresh breezes of the dawn were greetings wafted across the golden threshold of the sky, and when the moon was transformed into Selene, rising, under the cover of night, to see and admire, in silent love, the beauty of the setting sun.

By all means, let every hour witness fresh victories gained by science, but let us also cling fondly to that disposition of the human soul which, at an earlier age, having given us the childlike and beautiful dreams of mythology, still compels us, even in our moments of deepest thought, to realize the existence of

“Those first affections,  
Those shadowy recollections,  
Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain-light of all our seeing.”

It is well that scientists should enter into the study of nature with the determination to examine, ponder, and discover; but it is equally well that they who enter into an appreciation of the universe as the manifestation of God's love and wisdom, should at least receive the



respect and consideration which they deserve. As truly as it comes within the sphere of science to weave phenomena into unity, and to enlarge the idea that all things are governed by law, just so surely does it come within the sphere of religion to seek, in the world of nature, no less than in the soul of man, for those evidences which demonstrate the existence of a Supreme and Benevolent Ruler of the universe. Let us grant the pessimist's argument that there are innumerable imperfections in nature, and we are still safe in urging the validity of the argument from design and its attendant consequences.

While we admit that there is a sense in which the rose-colored vision of early life darkens as we advance in knowledge, we are fully warranted in arguing that the degree may be imperfect, without in the least destroying the evidences in favor of the argument from design. The validity of this argument depends not upon the evidences of stationary perfection in nature, but upon those evidences which indicate a general outline of progressive conditions.

Indeed, even if we confine ourselves to a his-



torical survey of man's condition, we cannot avoid the conclusion that, although his long and painful ascent from ignorance and degradation tell most powerfully against the prevalent idea of original perfection, there is nothing in these conditions which we cannot reconcile with the laws of progress, interpreted according to the principles of evolution.

Surely, as we examine man and nature in the light of this vast process, in which progress is so gradual as to be almost imperceptible, it is not surprising that we find no such thing as absolute perfection. It is because all things strive to ascend, and ascend in their striving, that we believe most firmly in the existence of God, and in the boundless capabilities of man's nature.

Occasionally we may meet with anomalies and contradictions which stagger us; but this is no reason why we should abandon all hope. Let us admit that there is a partial truth in the late John Stuart Mill's protest against the benevolence of Nature;\* let us acknowledge that there

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\* "Nature impales men, breaks them as if on wheels, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them

are times when the sorrows and disappointments of life baffle and bewilder us; but let us also hold firmly to the truth expressed in Whittier's beautiful lines:

"I see the wrong that round me lies,  
I feel the guilt within;  
I hear, with groan and travail cries,  
The world confess its sin.

"Yet in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed stake my spirit clings:  
I know that God is good.

"I dimly guess, from blessings known,  
Of greater out of sight;  
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own  
His judgments, too, are right.

"I long for household voices gone,  
For vanished smiles I long;

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to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyrs, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed."—*Three Essays on Religion.*

But God hath led my dear ones on,  
And He can do no wrong.

“I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.

“And if my heart and flesh are weak  
To bear an untried pain,  
The bruised reed He will not break,  
But strengthen and sustain.

“And so, beside the silent sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.

“I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.

“O brothers! if my faith is vain,  
If hopes like these betray,  
Pray for me, that my feet may gain  
The sure and safer way.

“And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen  
Thy creatures as they be,  
Forgive me if too close I lean  
My human heart on Thee!”

The great master of logic evidently approaches nature very much in the spirit in which a surgeon would examine and dissect a dead body; it is a purely intellectual operation, devoid of all feeling, and the result is visible.

The poet, on the other hand, invests the subject with that delicate charm which enables thought and feeling to beautify each other, and which also enables us to supply, by the synthesis of sentiment, the deficiencies growing out of the analysis of reason. Nor can we consistently argue that the conception of the poet is less likely to be true than the conception of the philosopher. Admitting, as every candid mind will, that Mr. Mill was, to some extent, authorized in attacking the superstition which regards nature as perfect, it is impossible for the same spirit of candor to deny the immense value of the poet's sentiment. It is true that nature perpetrates horrors, which, if men were or could be the authors of them, we should regard as crimes of great enormity; but it is not true that there is no meaning or encouragement in the preponderance of good over evil,—no significance in those glimpses of the beautiful

which appeal especially to the sensibility of poetic natures. In other words, even if we admit that the argument from design can never attain the power of direct induction, we cannot deny that the weight of evidence is strongly in its favor. Indeed, even Mr. Mill admits this, when he says, "Whatever ground there is, revelation apart, to believe in an Author of Nature, is derived from the appearances in the universe. Their mere resemblance to the works of man, or to what man could do if he had the same power over the materials of organized bodies which he has over the materials of a watch, is of some value as an argument from analogy; but the argument is greatly strengthened by the properly inductive considerations which establish that there is some connection, through causation, between the origin of the arrangements of nature and the ends they fulfil; an argument which is in many cases slight, but in others, and chiefly in the nice and intricate combinations of vegetable and animal life, is of considerable strength." So, also, even Hume, notwithstanding his speculative unbelief, confesses that "No one can look up to

that sky without feeling that it must have been put in order by an intelligent being." Confining ourselves to the more repulsive aspects of nature, it is but natural that we should sometimes falter in our faith; but just as surely as the day dispels the night, a wider and clearer appreciation of the laws of nature will rescue us from the Giant Despair.

To some extent we are necessarily saddened by the unceasing conflict between good and evil; but to a greater extent we are sustained and encouraged by the dictates of our better nature, and the well-founded belief that virtue will ultimately triumph over vice.

Because (as the world is at present constituted) suffering is an indispensable condition of progress, it may be true that we are always in the presence of a veiled spectre, whose business it is to remind us, as at the Egyptian festivals, that the last word is not spoken, that the enigma is not yet deciphered; but this is surely no reason why we should banish our fondest dreams, and betake ourselves to the gloomy abodes of pessimism. Notwithstanding the limitations of our knowledge, the imperfections of our nature,



and the sadness and sorrow which enter so largely into human life, there must always remain a sense in which the greatest philosopher, no less than the innocent child, feels it a duty and a privilege to exclaim, "Our Father, who art in the heavens."

Besides, even if we confine ourselves to the evidences derived from the historical side of the subject, we are compelled to admit that there is nothing more beautiful or instructive in history than the manner in which this instinctive longing of the human soul has traversed all ages, and made itself felt under all circumstances and conditions. Ages have changed, and many philosophical theses and theological dogmas have passed away; but in no period of transition, in none of the many destructive and reconstructive processes which mark the progress of the world, has the life-giving power of religion been destroyed.

According to one of the leading thinkers of the present day, "No exposure of the logical inconsistency of its conclusions—no proof that each of its particular dogmas was absurd—has been able to weaken its allegiance to that ulti-

mate verity for which it stands. After criticism has abolished all its arguments, and reduced it to silence, there has still remained with it the indestructible consciousness of a truth which, however faulty the mode in which it has been expressed, was yet a truth beyond cavil. . . . The truly religious element of religion has always been good; and that which has proved untenable in doctrine and vicious in practice, has been its irreligious element; and from this it has been ever undergoing purification."\*

Nor is it necessary, in adopting this view, to denounce theology as useless. In their way, theological dogmas are extremely useful; but we can no more limit religion to the circumscribed views of theologians, than we can concentrate the full glory of the sun within the retina of the human eye. In the one instance, as in the other, it is the merest fraction of light that is absorbed, and it is well that we should so understand it. It is perfectly true that there is a sense in which religion and theology are inseparable; but in admitting this, we merely empha-

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\* "First Principles of a New System of Philosophy."  
—Herbert Spencer.

size the necessity of understanding where the relationship begins and where it ends. If an examination of the subject proves that religion expires when the dogmas of theology are demonstrated to be false, then, of course, we are bound to regard the relationship as being of primary and vital importance. If, however, experience proves that the relationship is only of secondary importance, and, at the same time, subject to modifications growing out of the laws which govern human thought, then are we fully warranted in looking calmly at the present unsettled condition of the theological world. We have no right to refuse a respectful hearing to the representatives of the Greek Church and the Old Catholics, when they meet in solemn conference to determine the procession of the Holy Ghost; but we have a perfect right to say to these eminent divines, that they are simply repeating history in their futile attempts to reduce to a settled basis, questions which cannot be settled.\*

Theology of some kind we must have, but the

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\* "The study of the master-minds of the human race is almost equally instructive in what they achieved and in what they failed to achieve; and speculations which are

estimate which regards theological speculations as weak and, for the most part, fruitless efforts to reduce the Infinite to the comprehension of the finite, is very different from the common error which confounds the intrinsic value of religion with the extrinsic value of theology. Besides, suppose the fate of religion had depended on the truth of the speculations of the Christian Fathers,\* what a deplorable condition we should

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far from solving the riddle of existence, have their use in teaching us why it is insoluble.”—Mansel, *Metaphysics*.

\* According to Origen, the sun, moon, and stars are living creatures, endowed with reason:

“The stars move with so much order and so much intelligence, that in no degree is their onward course at any time seen to be impeded, so that is it not the extreme of all absurdity to say that so much order, and the observance of such great discipline and method, could be demanded or fulfilled by irrational things?”—*De Principiis*, Vol. I. chap. 7.

Clement of Alexandria alludes, with apparent assent, to a belief prevalent among the Greeks, that hail-storms, tempests, and similar phenomena, are due to the anger of demons and evil angels.—*Stromata*, Book VI. chap. 3.

According to Lactantius, it is the office of evil spirits to insinuate themselves into the bodies of men, thus causing disease and evil dreams.—*Divine Institutes*, Bk. II. ch. 15.

have been in long before this! Doubtless these early Christians believed that they were stating truths which would stand the test of time; whereas the truth is that they were simply indulging in vain and idle conjectures. As the world has grown wiser, and science has given us more intelligent cosmic theories, we lay aside, with a smile, these extravagant absurdities so seriously advanced under the sanction of theology; but we can never outgrow the conditions which made these conjectures possible. In its last analysis, theology is the language in which religion expresses itself, and as such, notwithstanding its errors and failures, must always have an existence. To deny its usefulness and importance is both unjust and unreasonable. To distinguish between its claims and those of religion, is the duty of the hour. Indeed, it may safely be said that the nice distinction which this latter condition requires, is, in the strictest sense, the principal duty of philosophy at the present time. To look manfully at the issues which are hourly gathering and gradually increasing in importance, we need something more than the weapons which theology furnishes.



Admitting the comparative value of these defences, we need to enlarge our views; we need to acknowledge the uselessness of much which passes under the garb of orthodoxy; we need to penetrate beneath the rubbish of ages for those immortal flowers which, independently of all creeds, thrive in every human heart, made beautiful by the sunshine of heaven. Having ascended to the serene heights of philosophy, we need to break down all narrow prejudices, and, in a spirit of patience and toleration, apply ourselves to an examination of those cardinal principles which underlie other religions as well as our own. In urging this broad definition of religion, I am aware how many objections will be urged against it; but we may be sure that the gradual growth of comparative mythology, and a better appreciation of the fundamental principles of religion, will more and more compel us to approach the subject in this broad and philosophical spirit. In fact, the very moment we refuse to regard other religions with a feeling of affection, we necessarily deny God's presence in the realm of human thought, and, for the sake of satisfying a Phari-



saic prejudice, reduce to a limited and distorted estimate, the order of God's providence.

As Professor Max Müller has well said, "By unduly deprecating all other religions, we have placed our own in a position which its Founder never intended for it; we have torn it away from the sacred context of the history of the world; we have ignored, or wilfully narrowed, the sundry times and divers manners in which, in times past, God spake unto the fathers by the prophets; and, instead of recognizing Christianity as coming in the fulness of time, and as the fulfilment of the hopes and desires of the whole world, we have brought ourselves to look upon its advent as the only broken link in that unbroken chain which is rightly called the Divine government of the world. Nay, worse than this: there are people who, from mere ignorance of the ancient religions of mankind, have adopted a doctrine more unchristian than any that could be found in the pages of the religious books of antiquity, namely, that all the nations of the earth, before the rise of Christianity, were mere outcasts, forsaken and forgotten of their Father in heaven, without a

knowledge of God, without a hope of salvation. If a comparative study of the religions of the world produced but this one result, that it drove this godless heresy out of every Christian heart, and made us see again, in the whole history of the world, the eternal wisdom and love of God toward all His creatures, it would have done a good work. And it is high time that this good work should be done. . . . I do not deny that the religions of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans were imperfect and full of errors, particularly in their later stages; but I maintain that the fact of these ancient people having any religion at all, however imperfect, raises them higher, and brings them nearer to us, than all their works of art, all their poetry, all their philosophy. Neither their art nor their poetry nor their philosophy would have been possible without religion; and if we will but look without prejudice,—if we will but judge, as we ought always to judge, with unwearying love and charity,—we shall be surprised at that new world of beauty and truth which, like the azure of a vernal sky, rises before us from behind the clouds of the

ancient mythologies." \* Because religious ideas and sentiments have prevailed in all ages, indicating thereby their indispensability to man, we are bound to pursue our investigations, not as apologists or defenders of any sect or creed, but as earnest and unprejudiced investigators, seeking for a reliable basis on which to rest our ideas of the philosophy of religion.

As an objection to this view, it may, perhaps, be argued that, as there have been instances of certain savages who, on their discovery, were found totally devoid of all religious ideas, the argument which starts from the universality of the religious sentiment is, therefore, without foundation. Growing out of the conclusions of some few eminent ethnographers, this view has gained rapidly within the last few years; but it is an error nevertheless. The fundamental defect in the reasoning of these objections is, that their definition of religion is altogether too narrow, while their conclusions are completely vitiated by their imperfect knowledge of savage life, and a very vague idea of

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\* Lectures on the Science of religion.

what they are seeking to discover. For the most part, their narrow definition has the fault of identifying religion rather with particular developments than with the deeper sentiment which underlies and renders such developments possible. The complete transformation in our ideas, which necessarily follows the enlargement of scientific thought, may and will cause us to look back in astonishment on the earlier and unscientific views of life and nature; but we may safely depend upon it that the knowledge which reveals electricity and gravitation as laws inhering in matter, will also reveal the indestructibility and indispensability of man's religious consciousness. Because we are no longer disturbed by visions of fitful interference with the order of nature, it surely does not follow that we can see nothing in the operation of law but the cold and cruel action of a relentless fatalism,—nothing in the yearning of our spiritual sensibilities but that cruel mockery which elevates our hopes merely for the pleasure of disappointing us.

“And though we wear out our life, alas!

Distracted as a homeless wind,

In beating where we may not pass,  
In seeking what we shall not find,"

Instinctively we feel this cannot be; and as we turn our attention to those noble specimens of humanity who, in all ages, have stood upon the mountain-peaks of thought, and stretched their hands toward heaven in a sublime and encouraging faith, just so surely do we feel that there is a meaning in, and must be an eternity for, those holy aspirations by means of which we recognize the likeness of the divine in the human. In the words of the poet,

"Shall man be left forgotten in the dust,  
When Fate, relenting, bids the flower revive?  
Shall nature's voice, to man alone unjust,  
Bid him, though doomed to perish, hope to live?"

"Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive  
With disappointment, penury, and pain?  
No! heaven's eternal spring shall yet arrive,  
And man's majestic beauty bloom again,  
Safe through the ceaseless years of love's eternal  
reign."

In other words, if we are compelled by science to accept the supremacy of law as an



article of our creed, so are we compelled by philosophy to guard carefully the interests of our higher culture, at the same time distinguishing between that orderly sequence in nature which indicates the existence of an Intelligent Cause, and that blind fatalism of pseudo-scientists, which, besides its logical inconsistencies, leads inevitably to atheistical despair.

It is one of the greatest advantages of scientific thought, that, in enlarging our views of nature, it compels us to exclude all ideas of caprice on the part of the Creator and Preserver of the universe; but this is a very different estimate from that which induces many an earnest but mistaken thinker to pronounce religion a delusion, and the universe a mere machine, beneath whose enormous wheels and ponderous hammers man is in constant danger of being crushed to powder.\* It is perfectly true that the destinies of nations, no less than the lot of individual man,—the sparrow's flight, no less than the orbits of the planets,—are all

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\* See especially "The Old Faith and the New."—Strauss.



subject to law; but it is equally true that we are, without in any way diminishing the claims of science, entitled to urge the possibility of spiritual intercourse between the creature and the Creator; it is equally true that we are warranted in arguing the possible coexistence of law and religion.

Indeed, if the idea that we are living in a God-governed universe is not an idle dream, it follows of necessity that it is precisely in the sphere of our religious consciousness that we may most reasonably expect the highest revelations of God's wisdom through the instrumentality of law. Whatever our opinions may be as to the likeness or unlikeness of the laws governing matter and spirit, it is simply impossible to concede the existence of law in the material world, and not look for the existence and operation of law in the spiritual world also. While there are material causes producing their natural consequences, there must also be spiritual laws connecting cause and effect. In the psychical as in the physical world, we are subject to limitations, because we are the subjects of law; but it would be a simple

absurdity to deny the usefulness and importance of religion on this account. After we have fairly examined the methods and uses of science, we are bound to admit that there is nothing in the scientific process which can ever take the place of religion. After we have conceded the immense value of the utilitarian side of science, there must always exist a large residuum of scientific thought, which we can only understand by bridging over the chasm between the visible and the invisible, and entering on that border-land where science and philosophy meet.

Nor can it be consistently argued that this view which assigns to philosophy the position of arbiter between science and religion, is either unfounded or objectionable. From the nature of their respective spheres, religion and science are confined to specialties, whereas philosophy embraces them both, insisting, at the same time, that the only correct estimate consists in harmonizing the facts of science with the grand and sacred experiences of religion.

I know that, in consequence of a misapprehension, there exists a growing disposition to

regard philosophy as a useless relic of the past. That this is, however, an error, it needs but very little penetration to discover. As we survey the history of philosophy, it is true that there is a great difference between the manner in which the philosophers of Greece entered on their work of physical speculation, and the manner in which modern scientists pursue their investigations.

It may even be true that we are called upon to pronounce as utter failures all those efforts which, expressing themselves in the theories of Thales, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus, and rising at last into the physical treatises of Aristotle, have contributed so little to the advancement of science. With all their wonderful intellectual activities and brilliant attainments, the philosophers of Greece can lay very little claim to the development of that inductive process which is so justly the pride of the nineteenth century. In this direction we cannot conceal their shortcomings, but in admitting this we by no means cancel the debt which we owe to philosophy. While we admit their many failures, we cannot deny that it is to her philosophers that Greece

owes the greatness of that intellectual empire on which the sun never sets; while we admit the many inconsistent guesses which philosophers propounded as explanations of physical phenomena, we cannot deny that, unless philosophy perpetually renews science, and gives it a stimulus in the right direction, there is great danger that physical speculation would rudely set aside the demands of our higher nature as being of little or no account. If we need science to explain the phenomenal laws of the universe, we certainly need philosophy to protect the demands of those phenomena which elude scientific analysis. In fact, from the nature of the elements with which it busies itself, philosophy must always be to science an indispensable ally and an invaluable guide.

The old questions asked in the youth of the world have lost none of their meaning in view of our scientific attainments. We have, in many instances, grown wiser as we have grown older; but, we may depend upon it, there can never come a time when science will be able to dispense with the services of philosophy.

Instead of science dethroning philosophy, as

is sometimes supposed, there exists, in view of our increasing scientific knowledge, the greater reason why philosophy should remain, as of old, the supreme arbiter and ultimate court of appeal.\* Indeed, if we examine carefully the uses performed by philosophy, we cannot but be forcibly impressed by the fact that, while the discoveries of science improve man's physical condition, it is only when philosophy steps in and

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\*“We cannot justify the processes by which we interpret nature, unless we scrutinize the processes of the human spirit which performs them, and search after the principles and faiths which these processes assume and rest upon. We cannot discover and vindicate the grounds on which our inquiries rest, without finding them imbedded in man's being as axioms and principles which, as the result of further scrutiny, we find that he can neither question nor set aside. The foundations of the science of nature, in the last analysis, are discovered in the ineradicable beliefs and convictions of the human spirit, and it is only by the earnest and careful study of this spirit that we can find them, and, having found them, can recognize them as the principles by which we interpret both nature and man.”—“*The Sciences of Nature versus the Science of Man*,” by Noah Porter, D.D., LL.D., President of Yale College.



encourages the thirst for fresh truth, that we realize the greatness of man's destiny and the possibilities of human progress. It is possible that other pursuits may do more to increase our stock of positive knowledge; but it is not possible that the sciences of nature, without philosophy to furnish impulse and interpretation, can ever attain to their true dignity, or accomplish their designed purpose. In other words, while philosophy encourages the uses of science, it also supports the claims of religion; and thus, from its power of abstraction and its impartial estimate, is in a position to determine questions which the mere scientist or religionist will always fail to appreciate.

As an eminent French writer has well said, "Whatever empirics and utilitarians may say on the subject, there are certainties apart from the experimental method, and there is a progress disconnected with brilliant or beneficent applications. The mind of man may put forth its power in laboring in harmony with reason, yet discover genuine truths in a sphere as far above that of laboratories and manufactures as their sphere is above the region of the coarsest arts.

In a word, there is a temple of light that unfolds its portals to the soul neither through calculation nor through experiment, which the soul nevertheless enters with authority and confidence, so long as it holds the consciousness of its sovereign prerogatives. When will professed scientists, better informed of the close connection between metaphysics and science,\* whence our modern knowledge of nature has sprung, better taught in the necessary laws that govern the conflict of reason with the vast unknown, confess that there are realities beyond those they attain? When will science, instead of the arrogant indifference it assumes in presence of philosophy, admit the fertility, beyond estimate, of the latter?† Let us admit that the school-

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\* "England's thinkers are aga'in beginning to see what they had only temporarily forgotten,—that the difficulties of metaphysics lie at the root of all science; that those difficulties can only be quieted by being resolved, and that, until they are resolved—positively whenever possible, but at any rate negatively—we are never assured that any knowledge, even physical, stands on solid foundations."—John Stuart Mill.

† "Nature and Life," by Fernand Papillon.

boy of the present day is better versed in science than Plato and Aristotle were, and the intrinsic greatness of these eminent philosophers still remains. We may smile at the absurdity of many of their physical speculations; but we cannot refuse to acknowledge their greatness as leaders in philosophy; we cannot repudiate the debt which we justly owe them.

It is not because these intellectual giants have served, in some instances, to illustrate the weakness of human reason, that we should rush hastily to the conclusion that their philosophy has failed to accomplish its purposes. It is because, in their noble endeavors to pierce the darkness which surrounds the problem of human existence, they have set us an example which we cannot imitate too closely, that we should admire, cherish, and venerate their memory. Their conclusions were sometimes derived from false premises, but the breadth of thought and nice discrimination which have immortalized the name of Athens can never cease to exercise a powerful influence over all earnest thinkers coming somewhat later in the day, but dealing, like their illustrious predecessors, with the problems

of life and mind. Nor can it be said that this view of the relationship between religion, science, and philosophy in any way militates against that progressive spirit which we regard as so hopeful a characteristic of the present age. Certainly the line of reasoning which rests on the premises of such a relationship is necessarily opposed to that unscientific spirit which mistakes the antagonism between science and theology for a conflict of principles between science and religion. In assuming this position, however, there is not the slightest encouragement given to anything opposed to the advancement of reason. Whatever may be said in support of religion as a civilizing power, it cannot be denied that, in the absence of reason to enlighten and direct its movements, it invariably degenerates into ignorance and superstition. While we recognize the powerful influence which religion exercises on the formation of character, and its immense importance as a provision meeting the needs of humanity, it is useless to conceal the fact that it is only useful in so far as it is regulated by reason. By all means, therefore, let us emphasize the claims of

reason, and insist on the right of unrestricted research and discussion; but let us at the same time remember that, although we cannot have progress without change, we may have change without progress. It is one thing to cultivate a scientific spirit subject to the guidance of philosophy, but it is quite another to render science unscientific by indulging in an iconoclastic spirit, which very often destroys much that is useful and true, because it seems, for the moment, opposed to the demands of a hasty and imperfect generalization. It is a duty which we owe to the cause of truth, to acknowledge our immense debt to science; but it is equally a duty which we owe to the higher interests of humanity, to enter our protest against that false estimate which refuses to recognize religion otherwise than as an effete relic of a superstitious past.

Indeed, the more carefully we examine the evidences furnished us by the general tendency of scientific thought, the more clearly will it appear that it is precisely at this point that we encounter our real danger. As the matter now stands, and in view of the increased facilities



for promoting knowledge, there is little or no danger that the human mind will ever relapse into the intellectual torpor of the middle ages; but there is some danger that we may err in the other direction, and, by too exclusive an intellectual culture, underestimate the value of those finer sensibilities which, although incapable of being reduced to the exactness of an algebraic problem, are nevertheless important elements in the development of human nature and the education of the world. In other words, it becomes a necessity in dealing with the mixed problems of religion, science, and philosophy, to remember, above all other considerations, that the ultimate verities of religion are resolvable not into the subtleties of theological speculation, but into certain fundamental principles inhering in human nature, and subject to modification, but not destruction, under the advancement of knowledge. To meet the exigencies of the time, we need to recognize that our spiritual culture depends not on what creeds we profess, but on that larger and simpler faith which recognizes, above all other considerations, the parental character of God,—a faith,

indeed, for which there seems no language so appropriate as the sublime exclamation first uttered during the solitude and agony of Gethsemane.\*

It is a necessary condition of progress that science and philosophy should gradually change the character of our creeds, but we may rest assured we can never attain an intellectual status which will preclude the necessity of harmonizing this utterance of the Saviour with the greatest achievements of science and philosophy. Rising in their grand simplicity above the darkness of that memorable hour, these words of the Saviour's not only reach, by their recognition of the supremacy of law, beyond the possibilities of scientific thought; they also invest with a deep and indestructible meaning, that sense of dependence which constitutes the basis of religion. In one sense, the idea suggested by these memorable words is in perfect harmony with the experience of every one who has attempted to fathom the mystery of his own being, and, at the same time, understand the limitations by which he is surrounded:

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\* "Thy will be done."—Matthew, xxvi. 42.

“But what am I?  
An infant crying in the night;  
An infant crying for the light;  
And with no language but a cry.”

In another sense, and that, perhaps, the most important, it suggests the universality of certain spiritual laws, no less than the existence of those physical laws which guide the planets in their courses, and regulate the alternations of the seasons. The glory of man's existence consists in his power of thought; but without the coördinate influence of sentiment to beautify the world and elicit our finer traits of character, we should certainly miss much that gives a healthy stimulus to progress, we should certainly fail to appreciate the soundness of St. Paul's reasoning when he assigned to charity the first place among the cardinal virtues.

It is frequently said by the followers of Auguste Comte, that the human race, conceived as a whole, is a concrete existence; and if we accept the proposition as indicating a condition of general progress toward perfection, it is undoubtedly a true one.

There is a sense in which the present neces-

sarily derives its character from the past,—a sense in which the future will necessarily be the result of the present; but if we allow ourselves to be governed in our views solely by the intellectual filiation of mankind, we shall certainly fail to appreciate the law of continuity as fully as it deserves. In the dreams, hopes, and aspirations of the human spirit, there is no less a law of continuity than in the intellectual development of the race.

By studying carefully the growth of the religious instinct, we cannot but be forcibly impressed by the gradually ascending steps by means of which the human soul has passed through the experiences of Fetishism, Polytheism, Monotheism, Spiritualism, Idealism, and Christianity; until, at the present moment, the best minds are striving for a philosophical recognition of some common ground on which, as in a Field of the Cloth of Gold, all the religious aspirations of humanity may meet, and, in their meeting, beautify and support each other. The true principles of progress consist not in destroying the faiths of humanity, but in so far harmonizing science and religion, that we may

realize, in the light of an enlarged philosophy, the truth of Virgil's beautiful lines :

“They leave, at length, the nether gloom, and stand  
Before the portals of a better land:  
To happier plains they come, and fairer groves,  
The seats of those whom heaven, benignant, loves.  
A brighter day, a bluer ether, spreads  
Its lucid depths above their favored heads;  
And, purged from mists that veil our earthly skies,  
Shine sun and stars unseen by mortal eyes.”

Possibly, or even probably, we may have to pass through many trials and witness many changes before we can attain so desirable a condition as that described by the Latin poet; but this is no reason why it should be considered absolutely unattainable. If there is one thing taught more clearly than another by the philosophy of history, it is that the world is slowly, but surely, approaching that synthesis between religion and science on which the argument of this essay essentially rests. Human society, laws, languages, and all the wonderful attainments of science and art, are all but so many evidences that the religious phenomena of the world, besides being an indispensable necessity, are,



equally with the laws of the physical world, the result of an Infinite Intelligence who "sees the end from the beginning." If, as Cousin says, "History is the manifestation of God's supervision of humanity, and the judgments of history are the judgments of God," there is no escape from the conclusion that the Divine pre-science which endowed man with his religious characteristics must evidently have designed that they should be capable of adaptation to every successive intellectual advance, and also that the fairest fruits of religion should be those borne under the brightest sunshine of intelligence. In the spiritual, as in the material world, life and light invariably go together; and, therefore, it is the merest fallacy to suppose that the advancement of reason can ever destroy the truths of religion. As Baring Gould has well said, "The philosopher is impressed with a desire to separate reason from faith, and put it by itself apart, and then erect it into a totality excluding and annihilating faith. I have shown that such an attempt inevitably breaks down. The theologian, on the other hand, endeavors to oppose authority to reason, to make all demonstration

deductive, to erect revelation into a fatal criterion of all truths. His attempt must result in a revolt of the intellect. If we look about for a simple and indecomposable idea which may harmonize these complex terms, and serve as the proportional mean between them, we shall find it in the idea of the indefinite, or that which is incessantly defining itself without being ever completely successful, and which has, therefore, two faces,—one intelligible to reason, the other accessible to the sentiment by faith. Religion and philosophy are not two contradictory systems, but are the positive and negative poles, of which the axis, uniting and conciliating them, is the idea of the indefinite, which, expressing two complex terms, the body and the spirit, the finite and the infinite, represents the constitutive and fundamental nature of man." Let it be granted that the world moves intellectually as well as physically, and there will still remain a sense in which religion must ever stand as the representative of man's highest and purest aspirations; there must always remain a sense in which we are bound to recognize that man's restless thirst after knowledge is not the only

condition essential to human progress. The interests of Religion demand neither a sacrifice of our intellectual powers, nor the encouragement of superstition against the demonstrations of reason. The cause of Progress demands no blind adhesion to theories hastily propounded in the name of science.

For the interests both of religion and science, we need freedom of investigation, but we are sadly mistaken if we suppose that we can safely avoid that philosophical insight and discrimination, which, without depreciating in the least the claims of science, enables us to coördinate the laws revealed in nature with that higher law which embraces man's spiritual consciousness, and deals with the principles of righteousness and love. The foundations of religion rest on the consciousness of our relation to God, and it is, therefore, simply impossible to imagine a period in the history of human progress when a factor so absolutely indispensable shall have lost its position and importance. During the childhood of the world, man projected his individuality into the objects of nature; he believed that the sun, moon, and stars were living beings

endowed with greater strength than his own, and he worshipped them accordingly.

Feeling that there was, between nature and himself, a strange but powerful bond of connection, it was but natural that man should invest all natural phenomena with the qualities of personality more or less resembling his own. At this stage of human existence, the conditions were precisely those which we see repeated in the life and development of every child.

The first explanation which children give to everything is invariably the human explanation, investing, indeed, with the qualities of life and personality even the most inanimate objects, and believing, with all earnestness and sincerity, that chairs and wooden horses are actuated by the same sort of personal will as nurses and children and kittens. In the case of the child, as in the case of the untutored adult, the conditions are valuable as representing the inherent tendency of human consciousness.

They may or may not prove the reliability of the instinct which seeks everywhere for the evidences of a personal God, but they do prove that there is a vast substratum of human feel-

ing which we cannot ignore in entering into the philosophy of religion; they do prove, notwithstanding the grotesque character of many of these nature-myths,

“That in all ages  
Every heart is human;  
That in even savage bosoms  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,  
For the good they comprehend not;  
That the feeble hands and helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Trust God’s right hand in that darkness,  
And are lifted up and strengthened.”

Leaving behind us the simpler faith which these nature-myths represent, and realizing more and more the universality and supremacy of law, let us, therefore, never forget, no matter how indistinct the utterance, that these early manifestations of human consciousness express certain fundamental principles which science and philosophy are bound to recognize and provide for.

As we boldly explore the “outer world,” voyaging away from Troy and Greece even further than Ulysses went, we will undoubtedly discover



fresh evidences of the greatness and future possibilities of the human mind; but we may safely depend upon it, after every allowance has been made for the advancement of reason, that we shall never cultivate the true principles of progress until we have realized the immense value of those lisplings and stammerings of the human soul which nothing but "the beauty of holiness" can satisfy. In other words, it is not too much to say that, even if it were possible for science to exhaust the arcana of nature, leaving nothing to be desired or discovered, it would still remain a solemn and indestructible fact that the most enlarged scientific culture is inadequate to the demands of man's religious consciousness. It is perfectly true that science enables us to trace the evidences of those wonderful adaptations which give to the term Nature such an inexhaustible meaning; but it is equally true that the cultivation of our finer sensibilities introduces us into a realm wherein we realize the beauty of those spiritual conditions which render it strictly true that it is only the pure in heart who see God. The scientific knowledge which has enabled us to measure the

heavens, to descend into the depths of the earth, to mitigate suffering, and to prolong life, is unquestionably of the greatest value and importance, both as a means for facilitating the triumph of mind over matter, and also as an indispensable condition in helping forward the progress of the human race. In admitting this, however, let us not deny that there is an equal claim to be urged on behalf of that higher consciousness which brings us face to face with the stern realities of life and eternity. While we yield our willing admiration to the earnest student of nature, and rejoice with him in his exultation over every newly discovered truth, there is nothing irrational or inconsistent in our kneeling with the devout religionist, under a consciousness of that awful mystery of evil which besets, perplexes, and overshadows us in our efforts to cultivate a noble life,—that strange and startling contrariety in man's nature which induced even Faust to exclaim, when about to surrender himself to the tempter:

“Two souls, alas! are lodged within my breast,  
Which struggle there for undivided reign:  
One to the world, with obstinate desire,

And closely cleaving organs, still adheres.  
Above the mist the other doth aspire,  
With sacred vehemence, to purer spheres."

Indeed, it is this fearful struggle between man's higher and lower nature which gives to religion its grandest meaning; it is this which demonstrates its usefulness and value as an elevating and purifying influence; it is this tremendous conflict between the powers of darkness and the powers of light, which gives such significance to that "cry of the human," so easily detected under all conditions of religious speculation, and which, because it also permeates and vitalizes our own religious consciousness, gives meaning and beauty to the familiar hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

It is a fact beyond dispute, that progress depends primarily on reason; but it is no less a fact that the future greatness of Philosophy will very largely depend upon its ability to harmonize the claims of science and religion.

Without in the least disparaging the claims of science, it is high time that philosophy entered on this work of coördination and reconciliation.

Besides, in addition to the argument derived from the underlying reality of spiritual phenomena, it is obviously a false and dangerous mode of reasoning which would regard everything old as likely to be wrong, and everything new as likely to be right. The world moves surely, it is true; but it is the merest folly to suppose that the religious hopes and aspirations which have filled the past with so many sacred memories and associations, can ever cease to exercise an important function, even under the grandest attainments of science and philosophy. In fact, as we look back into the past, and carefully study the intellectual and spiritual filiation of mankind, it is not unreasonable to urge—accepting Newton and St. Francis of Assisi as representative examples—that there is a sense in which the purity of the saint is equal to the genius of the astronomer. It is impossible to think of Newton without feeling amazed at the greatness of the human mind; but it is equally impossible to think of the pure and gentle St. Francis without feeling that there is a beauty in religion which we can ill afford to lose. We need science

and philosophy for the enlargement and growth of the human intellect; but we also need religion to sustain us in our moments of darkness, to elevate and purify our desires, and to encourage and strengthen us in our conflict with that mystery of evil which gives such solemn significance to the problem of human life. In other words, the fruit of the tree of knowledge may indeed make us like gods, knowing good and evil; but it is only by partaking of the fruit of the tree of life that we can satisfy the demands of our higher nature, at the same time entering into a foretaste of the joys of Paradise, and preparing ourselves for that better life which awaits us on the other side of the grave.

“Down below, imaginations quivering  
Through our human spirits like the wind,  
Thoughts that toss like leaves upon the woodland,  
Hopes like sea-birds flashed across the mind;

“Down below, a sad, mysterious music,  
Wailing through the woods and on the shore,  
Burdened with a grand, majestic secret,  
That keeps sweeping from us evermore.



“Up above, a music that entwineth,  
With eternal threads of golden sound,  
The great poem of this strange existence,  
All whose wondrous meaning hath been found.”





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